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TAGS: PREL PINR PGOV RS LG

SUBJECT: (S/NF) RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR CRITICAL OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Classified By: Ambassador Catherine Todd Bailey. Reason: 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (S/NF) Ambassador Bailey met for 40 minutes on June 4 with Russian Ambassador Viktor Kaluzhny at his Embassy, joined only by interpreters. Kaluzhny seemed more fatigued than in previous meetings and admitted that he was tiring of his diplomatic posting. Kaluzhny, though, said several things that are worth noting, especially as they are critical of Russian policy or Russian officials:

-- He felt that Putin was being influenced by unspecified "third parties" in taking a hard line on U.S. missile defense plans and other issues. He said that the President's invitation to Putin for a meeting at Kennebunkport was exactly the type of initiative needed to move Putin off his hard line and separate him for these "third parties" who take Putin in unhelpful directions.

-- On Russian foreign policy overall, Kaluzhny admitted to having poor relations with Lavrov and said he thought Igor Ivanov had done a much better job of establishing "a balanced" foreign policy.

-- Discussing Embassy Riga's upcoming energy forum and President Bush's May 31 address on climate change, Kaluzhny, a former Russian Minister of Fuels, said that the USG had a simpler process for crafting energy policy than does Russia, where he said "too many people" are involved in policy formulation.

¶2. (S/NF) Comment: Kaluzhny is usually very careful to stick to the Moscow party line, so his criticism of his own government is quite remarkable. We offer no analysis of what he said, simply that he was willing to say it. His departure from Riga has long been rumored, but other than his statement that he was tiring of the job, he did not offer any evidence that it was imminent. He told Ambassador Bailey that he keeps Moscow fully informed of their meetings, but we suspect he will only provide a limited readout of today's exchange.

BAILEY